

OSRD Implementation

At the root of every OSRD effort is a clearly written bylaw that facilitates flexible development of existing green spaces. OSRD bylaws should not create permitting processes outside of the standard zoning bylaw or Subdivision Rules and Regulations. Rather, the provisions within the OSRD bylaw should build upon and borrow from existing requirements in a way that does not burden the developers' site planning efforts. Where appropriate, an OSRD bylaw should provide density bonuses or other incentives that make this style of development more attractive to proponents.

Financial Considerations

The use of OSRD, like many other smart growth strategies, saves money for both developers and municipalities by concentrating development and decreasing the costs for developing and maintaining infrastructure. The extent to which land needs to be cleared and graded can also be significantly reduced by removing steep slopes and valuable forest areas from the developable area. Also, studies have demonstrated that well-designed OSRD developments are creating higher property values than conventional developments with the same type of housing. This increase in value is the direct result of the increased site amenities including open space, views, and preservation of historic resources.



For More information:

Massachusetts Smart Growth Toolkit
<http://www.mass.gov/ocd>

<http://www.greenneighborhoods.org/site/Index.htm>
A non-profit Massachusetts organization dedicated to educating people about OSRD development and implementation.

<http://www.umich.edu/news/index.html?Releases/2004/Jun04/r062904a>
University of Michigan study finds homebuyers want view of woods, not large lawns.

<http://www.epa.gov/ebtpages/envismartgrowth.html>
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
EPA's site on smart growth including a focus on community based approaches to reducing sprawl.

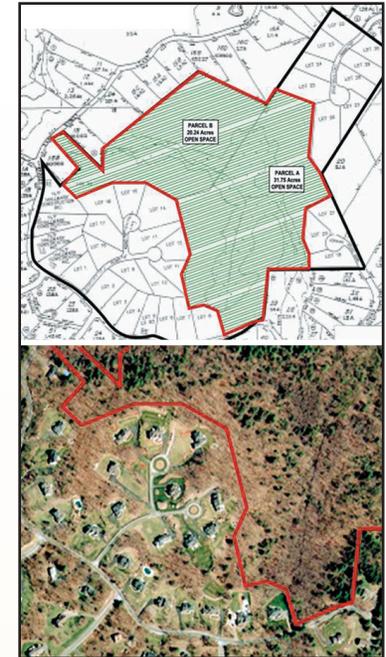
<http://www.state.ma.us/czm>
Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)
CZM is a founding Green Neighborhoods Alliance member and has actively promoted open space residential design along the coast and in coastal watershed communities.

MASSACHUSETTS SMART GROWTH

Toolkit



Open Space Residential Design (OSRD)



OSRD represents an approach to residential development that promotes open space preservation based on environmental and social priorities. It is a partnership development design between municipal officials and developers that provides innovative flexible incentives for highest marketability, mixed housing types and land uses, and minimal disturbance to the natural terrain.

The Problem

Over 16,000 acres of open space are developed in Massachusetts each year, much of it as residential sprawl. Although the rate of residential and commercial growth has steadily



increased, population density has decreased, indicating that more and more land is being used by fewer and fewer people. The increase in sprawl development has contributed to



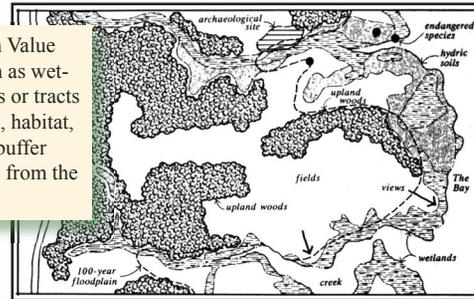
a variety of problems for Massachusetts communities including loss of community character, a lack of housing, social isolation of residents, and threats to natural resources and water quality.

The OSRD Site Planning Process

OSRD provides one of many tools that can help mitigate the impacts of suburban sprawl. Focusing on open space preservation, the technique is a form of subdivision design that maximizes resource protection through targeted resource set-asides. The process begins with determining how many lots could be developed under conventional zoning; this is the base yield of the property. From that point, the plan development process follows four basic steps:

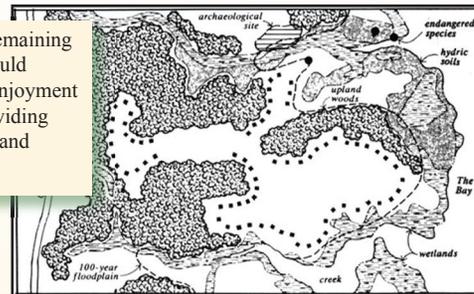
1.

Identify Conservation Value Areas on the site such as wetlands, significant trees or tracts of forest, steep slopes, habitat, cultural resources or buffer zones. Remove these from the “developable area.”



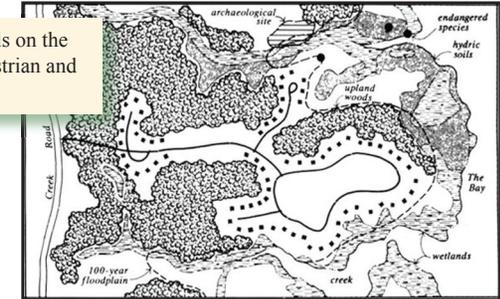
2.

Place houses in the remaining area in a way that would maximize residents enjoyment of these areas by providing access to open space and preserving views.



3.

Align roads and trails on the site to provide pedestrian and vehicle access.



4.

Draw lot lines around the homes last.



Rowley, Massachusetts

